

IPEDS Survey Methodology: Web Content

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IPEDS Survey Components

The following section, which is organized by the three seasonal reporting periods, offers a brief description of each survey component in the IPEDS data collection. For more information about each IPEDS survey component, visit [IPEDS Survey Components](#). In addition, NCES recommends reading [The History and Origins of Survey Items for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System \(2016-17 Update\)](#) for further detail on each IPEDS survey item and the legislative origins and requirements.

Fall Collection

Institutional Characteristics (IC)

The Institutional Characteristics component of the IPEDS survey collects basic data on each institution, such as institution name, location, educational offerings, distance education, control or affiliation, and student services. IC also collects data on student charges for either an academic year for levels of enrollment (undergraduate and graduate) or the six largest programs (if programs are primarily occupational/vocational). Finally, institutions report their cost of attendance (COA) for full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students, which includes tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, and other expenses (such as transportation, laundry, and entertainment). In calculating a student's financial aid award, COA is determined and used by the institution's financial aid offices. Undergraduate student charges data, which are the averages for all full-time undergraduates, may differ from institutional COA, which are limited to full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking students.

Completions

The Completions component collects data on the number of degrees or other recognized postsecondary credentials conferred from July 1 to June 30. It also collects data on the counts of awards conferred by award level, race/ethnicity, gender, and 6-digit Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code. Institutions must also report if programs are offered as distance education programs in each award level and CIP code reported. Institutions also report the number of awards conferred with multiple majors by 6-digit CIP code, degree level, race/ethnicity, and gender. The IPEDS DCS generates summaries by award level, race/ethnicity, and gender based on the first 2-digits of the CIP code. CIP code information is based on the [2010](#) version of the CIP codes.

In addition to the number of degrees and other recognized postsecondary credentials, this component also collects the number of students receiving degrees or other postsecondary credentials by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and award level. The student count data from this component reflect awards received from July 1 to June 30.

12-month Enrollment (E12)

The 12-month Enrollment component collects unduplicated headcount enrollment and instructional activity data for the 12-month reporting period from July 1 to June 30. E12 collects the student counts by race/ethnicity, gender, and level of student for those students enrolled during the reporting period. For students who attended at different levels (full- or part-time) within the 12-month period, institutions report the highest attendance level at which the student was enrolled. This component also collects data on instructional activity for the reported students enrolled during the reported period, which allows NCES to generate the full-time equivalent (FTE) for undergraduate student enrollment and FTE for graduate student enrollment. While the unduplicated headcount of graduate students includes those enrolled in doctor's degrees-professional practice programs, the reported

instructional activity for graduate students does not include instructional activity for doctor's degrees-professional practice students. E12 has a separate survey item that collects FTE for doctor's degrees-professional practice students; this FTE is combined with the instructional activity-based graduate student FTE when reporting total graduate student FTE.

Winter Collection

Admissions (ADM)

The Admissions component of IPEDS collects information about the selection process for entering first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students. Data obtained from institutions includes admissions considerations (e.g., secondary school records, admission test scores), the number of undergraduate students who applied, the number offered admission for admittance, and the number enrolled. Admissions data are collected only from institutions that do not have an open admissions policy for entering first-time students. Data collected are from the most recent fall term.

Graduation Rates (GR)

The Graduation Rates collects information on a cohort of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking students entering an institution during a particular year by race/ethnicity and gender; the number of students in the cohort who completed their program within 150 percent of normal time to completion (e.g., "normal" program completion time for a bachelor's degree would be 4 years); the number who transferred to other institutions; and the number of cohort exclusions. In addition, the GR component gathers the total number of students completing their program on time (within 100 percent of normal time to completion). As required by the HEA of 1965, as amended, this component also collects the 150 percent normal time to completion for two subcohort groups: the subcohort of students who received a Pell Grant and the subcohort of students who received a Direct Subsidized Loan but did not receive a Pell Grant.

GR helps institutions to comply with requirements of the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-542) legislation. Institutions operating on standard academic terms (semester, trimester, quarter, or 4-1-4) report on a fall cohort; all other institutions report on a full 12-month cohort (September 1 through August 31). Furthermore, for 4-year institutions, the cohort consists of those students who entered six years ago. For 2-year and less-than 2-year institutions, the cohort is made up of those students who entered three years ago.

200 Percent Graduation Rates (GR200)

The 200 Percent Graduation Rates component combines information reported in a prior collection via the Graduation Rates component with current information about the same cohort of students. From previously collected GR data, the DCS prepopulates GR200 with the following GR data: the number of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking students in a cohort year; the number of students in this cohort completing within 100 and 150 percent of normal program completion time (e.g., "normal" program completion time for a bachelor's degree would be 4 years); and the number of cohort exclusions. Then, GR200 collects the count of additional cohort exclusions and additional program completers between 151 and 200 percent of normal program completion time.

For 4-year institutions, the cohort consists of those students who start eight years ago, and for less-than-4-year institutions (2-year and less-than-2-year institutions), the cohort is made up of those students starting four years ago. For 4-year institutions, the information collected is limited to bachelor's-degree-seeking students, while less-than-4-year institutions report on the entire cohort (i.e., all degree/certificate-seeking students). Institutions operating on standard academic terms (semester, trimester, quarter, or 4-1-4) report on a fall cohort; all other institutions report on a full 12-month cohort (September 1 through August 31).

Outcome Measures (OM)

The Outcome Measures component collects data from degree-granting institutions on the award and enrollment status for four cohorts of undergraduate degree/certificate-seeking students. The four student cohorts are as follows:

- full-time, first-time entering students;
- part-time, first-time entering students;
- full-time, non-first-time entering students; and
- part-time, non-first-time entering students.

In addition to the total students in each of the four main cohorts, OM also collects subcohorts by Pell Grant recipient status (Pell Grant recipients and non-Pell Grant recipients), for a total of eight undergraduate subcohorts. The cohorts consist of all entering students who began their studies between July 1 and June 30. Student completion status is collected as of August 31st at 4, 6, and 8 years after students entered the institution. At each status point, institutions report the highest level of award students earned as of that status point.

In addition to completion status, the OM component collects enrollment status as of 8 years after students entered the reporting institution (August 31). For students who do not complete an award, institutions report the number of students, who remain enrolled at the reporting institution, leave the reporting institution and enroll at another institution, or are excluded from the cohort.

Student Financial Aid (SFA)

The Student Financial Aid is divided into two sections. Section 1 gathers student aid data awarded to undergraduate students, with particular emphasis on full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking students. Undergraduate student counts and awarded aid amounts are collected to calculate the net price of attendance for two subcohorts of full-time, first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students: those awarded any grant aid, and those awarded Title IV aid. Section 2 collects data on the educational benefits (i.e., Tuition Assistance Program or Post-9/11 GI Bill) received by military servicemembers, veterans, or eligible dependents.

Spring Collection

Academic Libraries (AL)

The Academic Libraries component collects information from degree-granting institutions on library collections, circulations, interlibrary loan services, and expenditures for the fiscal year. AL defines fiscal year as the most recent 12-month period that ends before October 1, and corresponds with the institution's fiscal year. Institutions first answer screening questions within the Institutional Characteristics component that determines the requirement to complete all or part of the Academic Libraries component.

The AL component consists of two sections:

- Section I is completed by institutions with any library expenditures greater than zero and collects data on interlibrary loan services, library collections, and circulation numbers including physical books, media, serials, digital or electronic books (including government documents), digital or electronic databases, digital or electronic media, and digital or electronic serials.
- Section II is completed by institutions with a total library expenditures greater than \$100,000 and collects additional expenditures including library staff wages and fringe benefits, materials and service costs, and operations and maintenance expenditures.

Fall Enrollment (EF)

The Fall Enrollment component is a fall census and has six separate parts. Institutions operating on a traditional academic year calendar (semester, trimester, quarter, or 4-1-4) report parts A, B, C, and D as of the institution's official fall reporting date as of October 15. Institutions operating on a nontraditional (other) academic calendar, a calendar that differs by program, or a calendar that enrolls students on a continuous basis report fall enrollment using parts A, B, C, and D for students who enroll any time during the period from August 1 to October 31.

Part A collects the number, race/ethnicity, gender, and attendance status (full- or part-time) of students enrolled in the fall, including the number who are first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students; the number who are degree/certificate-seeking undergraduates; total undergraduates; and total graduate students. In addition, Part A collects data on the number of students enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, at

least one but not all distance education courses, or no distance education courses. These data are reported by student level, undergraduate degree/certificate-seeking status, and student residence location (i.e., in same state or jurisdiction as the institution; in a different state or jurisdiction as the institution; outside the United States; or unknown).

Part B is required when data correspond to the fall of an odd-number year, but optional in an even-number year. This part collects the summary data on student age category by gender for undergraduate and graduate students by attendance status enrolled in the fall.

Part C is required when data correspond to the fall of an even-numbered year, but optional in an odd-number year. This part collects summary data on the residence of first-time degree/certificate-seeking undergraduate students and the number of those students who enroll in the fall that completed high school in the last 12 months by state or other United States jurisdiction of residence.

Part D collects data on the total number of undergraduate students who enter the institution for the first time in the fall term. This includes both full-time and part-time undergraduate students new to the institution, whether degree/certificate-seeking or not, and any students who transfer into the institution.

Part E collects data on retention rates, which quantify the proportion of the first-time student population enrolled during the previous fall term who returned to the same institution in the following fall term. Four-year institutions report their retention data for first-time, bachelor's degree-seeking undergraduate students attending at the full-time and part-time levels. Less-than-4-year institutions report their retention data for first-time undergraduate students attending at the full-time and part-time levels.

Part F gathers an estimated undergraduate program student-to-faculty ratio. The survey instrument includes a worksheet to assist the institution in calculating the ratio requested.

Finance

The Finance component collects a summary data on each institution's financial status for the most recent fiscal year ending prior to October of the current IPEDS Data Collection Year, including amounts of revenues by source and expenses by function, changes in net position, amounts of scholarships and fellowships, and pension.

This component is designed to follow the format of institutional financial statements suggested by the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Different versions of the Finance component are available based mainly on control of the institution: public, private nonprofit, and private for-profit. Public institutions choose between two versions of the component depending on which standards they used for their internal accounting: (1) GASB Statements 34 and 35 reporting standards or (2) FASB reporting standards.

Public institutions that use GASB reporting standards to prepare their financial statements report data on their statement of financial position (Part A), revenues and other additions (Part B), expenses and other deductions (Part C), summary of changes in net position (Part D), scholarships and fellowships (Part E), endowment assets (Part H), and pension information (Part M). Additionally, they report certain data for the U.S. Census Bureau, including revenue data (Part J), expenditure data (Part K), and debts and assets (Part L).

Private nonprofit institutions and public institutions that use FASB reporting standards to prepare their financial statements report data on their statement of financial position (Part A), summary of changes in net assets (Part B), scholarships and fellowships (Part C), revenues and investment return (Part D), expenses by functional and natural classification (Part E), and endowment assets (Part H).

Private for-profit institutions use a form that is similar to the private nonprofit form, but adjust to account for differences between private nonprofit and private for-profit institutions (e.g., restricted/unrestricted status of revenues was not collected from private for-profit institutions). Private for-profit institutions report data on balance sheet information (Part A), summary of changes in equity (Part B), student scholarships and fellowships (Part C), revenues and investment return (Part D), expenses by function (Part E), and income tax expenses

(Part F).

Human Resources (HR)

The Human Resources component of IPEDS, which has eight distinct but related parts (labeled A through H), collects data on the number of staff on the institution's payroll as of November 1 of the current IPEDS Data Collection year. However, not all institutions are required to complete all eight parts:

- degree-granting institutions with 15 or more full-time staff completed all parts;
- degree-granting institutions with fewer than 15 full-time staff completed Parts A, B, and G; and
- non-degree-granting institutions completed Parts A and B.

The following parts constitute the Human Resources component:

- Part A—Full-time instructional staff collects the number of full-time instructional staff by tenure status, academic rank, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Part B—Full-time noninstructional staff collects the number of full-time noninstructional staff by occupational category, tenure status, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Part C—Full-time staff summary is a calculated summary of the data reported in Parts A and B noninstructional staff by occupational category, tenure status, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Part D—Part-time staff collects the number of part-time staff by occupational category, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Part E—Part-time staff collects the number of part-time staff by occupational category, tenure status, and medical school status.
- Part F—Part-time staff summary is a calculated summary of data reported in Parts D and E
- Part G—Salary worksheet and salary outlays for full-time nonmedical instructional staff collects the number of full-time nonmedical instructional staff by length of contract and occupational category.
- Part H—Number of newly hired full-time permanent staff collects the number of newly hired full-time permanent staff by tenure status, race/ethnicity, and gender.